

John L. Atlee No. 161 South 11<sup>th</sup> St. N.

Mrs. Hart.

*Sydescephalus sentry.*

John L. Atlee

admitted March 9<sup>th</sup> 1820

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# On Hydrocephalus Scutus.

## Preface.

One of the most fatal and ungovernable diseases incident to childhood, forms the subject of my inaugural thesis. It is a disease, whose pathology is still obscure, and whose remedial treatment, is as yet extremely uncertain. I do not presume, to add any thing new or interesting, either to the pathology, or treatment of this disease. I have, succinctly, drawn up a few observations on its nature and cure. Such as it is, I submit with much respect and deference, to the examination of those, who are to decide on its merit; being well assured, that it will meet with that indulgence, which the first literary attempts of inexperienced youth, are entitled to receive from the votaries of science.

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Dr. Whist was the first physician, who described Hydrocephalus Scutus, as a distinct disease. He ascribed the disease to a state of debility in the vessels of the brain, in

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consequence of which the cholant arteries throw out a greater quantity of fluids, than the absorbents can take up. Dr Luca was the first who combatted this erroneous idea of the nature of this disease; He showed, that it consisted in a state of the brain, directly the source of activity, namely, in an inflammatory action of that organ. Drs Goddard and Withering seem to have entertained similar views. Dr Rush developed these ideas of the pathology of this disease more fully, and all modern writers, with the exception of Barvian and perhaps a few others, have adopted these sentiments. Dr Barvian supposed torpor of the absorbents of the brain, to be the cause of hydrocephalus internus. In this opinion, however, he is followed by no one else.

Within a few years past, the pathology of this disease has been much elucidated. Sympathy, which seems to have an agency in so many of the phenomena, both of health and disease, has lately been called in, to account for circumstances connected with this disease, altogether inexplicable on other principles. I allude to the evident connection which subsists between morbid affections of the chylopoietic viscera and hy-

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cephalic symptoms; a connection, which it is of the utmost importance to keep in mind, in conducting our curative treatment -

It appears to me that this disease may, with great propriety, be divided into two varieties, *idiopathic* and *sympathetic*. By *Idiopathic hydrocephalus*, I understand, that form of the disease, which depends on a primary or idiopathic inflammatory action of the capillaries of the brain; and which corresponds with what Dr. Abercrombie\* has ascribed under the name of "chronic inflammation of the brain". By *Sympathetic hydrocephalus*,\* I would understand that variety of this malady, which arises from primary irritation seated in the chylopoietic viscera. These two varieties are, I believe, farthest in nature, and may generally, I feel persuaded, be distinguished, by a careful attention to the symptoms in the forming and first stages.

*Symptoms of Idiopathic Hydrocephalus Acutus.*

Languor, for a day or two; followed by an accession of fear, ushered in sometimes by shivering. Oppression and

\* See No. 5 of the Edinburgh Medical & Surgical Journal.

\* See Dr. Sympson's Therapeutics in Vol. 10.

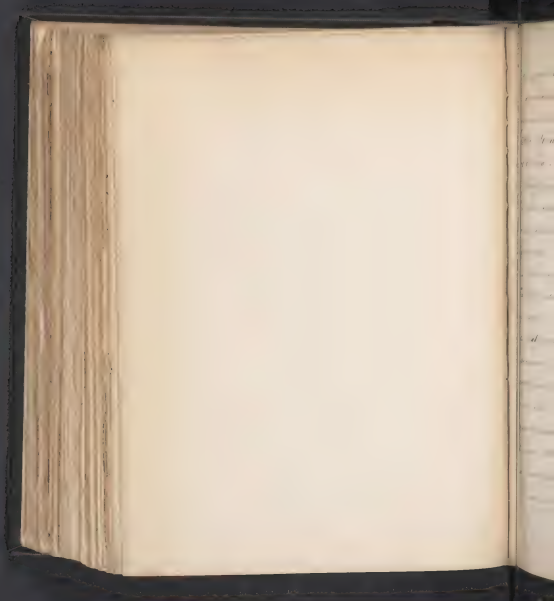
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unwillingness to be disturbed; severe pain in the head, not  
 at first confined to one spot, but darting through it in various  
 directions; extending frequently down the neck to the shoulders,  
 face flushed, and intolerance of light; pains in different  
 parts of the body; pupils usually contracted; eyes exquisitely  
 sensible to the light, and sometimes suffused; tongue white  
 moist, and sometimes quite clean; sleep disturbed, with  
 starting and frightful dreams; grinding of the teeth during  
 sleep; bowels generally costive, though frequently natural, and  
 sometimes affected with diarrhoea; pulse frequent, tense,  
 and quick; slight acrimony at last begins to appear, which  
 is perhaps only observed during the night, or upon awaking  
 out of sleep; sometimes the patient lies arising, or talking  
 incoherently, but out of which state he can be readily roused,  
 so as to talk sensibly. "In other cases, instead of acrimony,  
 there occurs a peculiar forgetfulness, the patient using one  
 word instead of another; misnaming persons and things,  
 mistaking the day, or the time of day, or showing in some  
 similar manner a confusion of thought." The second stage  
 now begins, which is marked by a sinking of the pulse, from

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After the war had been over the two friends  
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The London Convention, which was  
 convened in the month of June, 1840, at  
 the request of the American Convention, was  
 composed of delegates from the various  
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 Convention was held in the city of  
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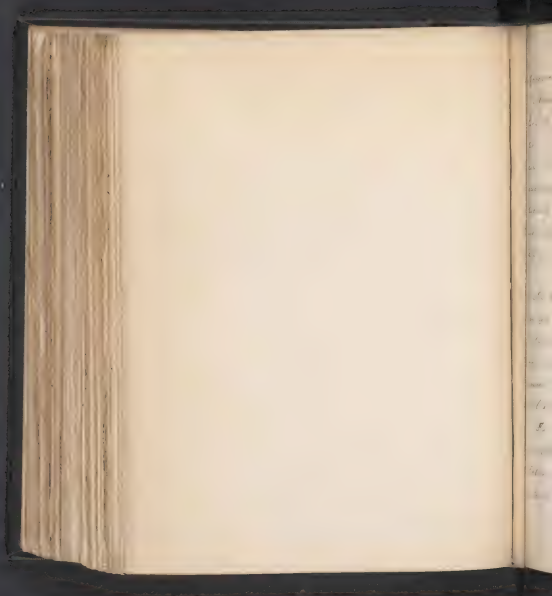


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*Diagnosis of the disease.*

The disease is characterized by the following signs and symptoms:—  
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### *Treatment.*

The treatment of this disease is directed to the removal of the  
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The first of these is the fact that the  
 United States is the only country in the world which  
 has a large, permanent, and organized army. The  
 army of the United States is the only one in the world  
 which is not a standing army. It is a volunteer  
 army, and its members are not paid for their  
 services. The United States is the only country  
 in the world which has a large, permanent, and  
 organized navy. The navy of the United States  
 is the only one in the world which is not a  
 standing navy. It is a volunteer navy, and its  
 members are not paid for their services. The  
 United States is the only country in the world  
 which has a large, permanent, and organized  
 air force. The air force of the United States  
 is the only one in the world which is not a  
 standing air force. It is a volunteer air force,  
 and its members are not paid for their services.

The second of these is the fact that the  
 United States is the only country in the world  
 which has a large, permanent, and organized  
 police force. The police force of the United  
 States is the only one in the world which is  
 not a standing police force. It is a volunteer  
 police force, and its members are not paid for  
 their services. The United States is the only  
 country in the world which has a large, permanent,  
 and organized fire department. The fire  
 department of the United States is the only one  
 in the world which is not a standing fire  
 department. It is a volunteer fire department,  
 and its members are not paid for their services.



Internal frictions of mercurial ointment, should be resorted to, if the calomel, exhibited internally, does not appear to affect the system soon enough. It is probable that the advantages, derived from the calomel in this disease, arise, in many cases, more from its salutary action on the morbid condition of the chylopoietic viscera, than from its affecting the salivary glands, and thereby producing a revulsion from the brain.

By active purging, & leeching or cupping the temples, in the early stage, we may generally succeed in arresting the progress of the disease. It is, therefore, most particularly to be kept in mind, that in this stage, our chief reliance on the efficacy of medicine ought to be placed. Let not the physician, in doubtful cases, hesitate, and use a feeble practice, under the hope that it may not be this disease; which, when it has taken a fair hold on the patient, is so difficult to overcome. Active purging, and general & local depletion, should at once be resorted to. The bowels, for several days after the disappearance of all hydrocephalic symptoms, <sup>being</sup> kept perfectly loose.

Dr. Sydenham says, he has applied leeches and blisters to the

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region of the liver; so prepare the way for, and cooperate with  
the purgative medicines, in restoring the vessel to a sound  
state - and, he thinks, considerable benefit was derived from  
this practice -

The general bleeding, though evidently, most bene-  
ficial in the early stage, may be repeated at any time,  
during the progress of the disease, in a stout child, & if it  
be otherwise indicated by the state of the pulse -

I have thus drawn up, concisely, a few observations on this  
formidable disease - I am fully sensible that they are de-  
ficient - I submit them, with sincere respect, to the judi-  
cial faculty of my Alma Mater -

